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ICS Registry

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Director
Intelligence Community Staff
Washington, D.C 20505

15 DEC 1982
LOGGED

DCI/ICS 82-3887
9 December 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR: Honorable Robert C. McFarlane
Deputy Assistant to the President
for Security Affairs

SUBJECT: Fifth Orbiter Issue [redacted] 25X1

In response to your request at the 3 December 1982 SIG (Space) Meeting, the attached DCI position on the fifth orbiter is provided. [redacted] 25X1

[redacted] 25X1

Attachment

[redacted] 25X1

UPON REMOVAL OF ATTACHMENT,
RECLASSIFY THIS MEMORANDUM
TO UNCLASSIFIED

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DCI Position on Fifth Orbiter Issue

The DCI position is that our programs alone do not require a fifth orbiter. From a national perspective, however, we are concerned about our current lack of understanding of the long-term operability of the STS and the potential impact of attrition. Because of this, the need exists to ensure that the U.S. can adequately maintain an operational four orbiter fleet. This requires some reserve capacity to cope with unforseen contingencies and a capability to repair an orbiter after a major incident. Given these needs, we do not believe it is wise to allow the STS orbiter production base to be shut down completely. Alternative II, by maintaining limited orbiter production capability, will preserve the nation's flexibility to respond to future needs at a modest additional cost compared to Alternative I. Alternative II is our recommended choice.

The DCI also notes that CIA has recently estimated that the Soviets are undertaking a variety of new space programs that will result in a period of rapid expansion.* Soviet space hardware costs are expected to reach the equivalent of $12 Billion a year by 1986--double the current outlays. The increased costs reflect

- Achievement of a permanent Soviet presence in space

- Advances in the technology available for intelligence collection, photoreconnaissance, and military support satellites

- Expansion of navigation, data relay, communications, and weather satellite networks

- Development of a reusable spacecraft, a reusable space transportation system similar to the U.S. shuttle, two new space launch vehicles, and increasing production of the largerst of the current Soviet space launchers

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